

## **Tribes, fishermen rally for Klamath salmon**

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**By John Driscoll, staff writer**

About 100 American Indians, fishermen and environmentalists lined U.S. Highway 101 here with a message to federal regulators: Tear down the Klamath River dams. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is weighing Portland, Ore.,-based PacifiCorp's request for a 50-year license for six dams. The commission scheduled the public hearing at the Red Lion Inn after hundreds wrote in to complain that its other four meetings were all held inland -- far from the North Coast, which is most affected by the hydropower project. Protesters said the ScottishPower subsidiary's dams block salmon from reaching historic spawning grounds, and its reservoirs heat and foul water that is sent to the remaining fish runs on the lower river. That has in large part devastated a legendary fishery for Indians and commercial and sport fishermen, they said. Robley Schwenk, a Yurok Indian born on the lower Klamath in 1936, said he's watched as runs of salmon, lamprey, candlefish and sturgeon have plummeted. "There used to be a multitude of tourists and fish," Schwenk said. But PacifiCorp has ignored the idea of removing the dams, or even building fish ladders to pass salmon above the dams, he said. The National Research Council and the California Energy Commission have also called for an analysis of decommissioning at least one of the dams. Drivers in rush-hour traffic honked their horns in support of the protesters, who carried signs that said, "Save our Salmon" and, "Corporations swim in money, fish in water." Yurok tribal member Glenn Scott said he hopes to raise public awareness to the Klamath's problems. Massive fish kills, like the one in 2002, and the hundreds of thousands of young fish dying of diseases in recent years point to a troubled system, Scott said. "Fish can't afford to wait for better water," Scott said. Some said they've seen their livelihoods evaporate with increasing fishing restrictions meant to protect Klamath salmon. The Klamath's struggling salmon influence quotas and seasons from Oregon to San Francisco, driving hundreds from the industry in the past 20 years. Former commercial salmon fisherman and lower river fishing guide Craig Bell said there's no time to wait for action on FERC's part. Bell called for immediate interim measures to improve river conditions followed by a quick, complete analysis of the dams' effects. "We want some action fairly rapidly," Bell said.